



LESSONS FROM KING ASA

A non-medical friend approaches you, pointing to a part of their body. 'I've got a pain here – what is it?' You smile and inwardly sigh. Some people seem to think that doctors just know everything. Many don't realise the methodology of history, examination, investigations. Or even that after this, many symptoms will remain medically unexplained.

We health professionals know how fallible we are. We know that even if the symptoms fit into a pattern we recognise, that even then we cannot always fix it. Despite this, medicine is our first instinct; it's what we rely on.

My son appeared to be in a lot of discomfort with reflux as a young baby. I knew this was common and that he would likely grow out of it. He appeared to be gaining weight ok, but I mused about going to the doctors to discuss medication as his symptoms worsened. That same week I happened to read about King Asa in 2 Chronicles: 'In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa was afflicted with a disease in his feet. Though his disease was severe, even in his illness he did not seek help from the Lord, but only from the physicians. Then in the 41st year of his reign Asa died and rested with his ancestors.'¹

These verses challenged me. I had unintentionally not prayed

about my baby's symptoms, but instead had automatically considered the NICE guidelines on childhood reflux. Yes, being a doctor is my job, and hours of study and practice have prepared me to think in a certain way, but I want to be a Christian first – a person of faith.

The shocking fact about King Asa is that he was not a bad king. The Chronicler records, 'Asa's heart was fully committed to the Lord all his life.'² This led me to realise you can be fully committed to the Lord and yet still make bad decisions and neglect to bring everything before him in prayer.

I explained this to a Christian friend who visited and she offered to pray for my baby as he started crying in discomfort after a feed. As she prayed, he calmed and that day was the best I had had with him. I felt that God was giving me a much-needed reminder, 'seek me first'.

We can learn from King Asa's mistake. We need to seek God first and not rely exclusively on our profession. Christ, after all, is the greatest physician.

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references

1. 2 Chronicles 16:12-13

2. 2 Chronicles 15:17